

**WSDOT**  
**Commerce Corridor Feasibility Study**  
**Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**April 30, 2004**

**Attendees:**

Dan O’Neal (WSDOT, FMSIB)	Senator Dan Swecker (WA State Senate)
Paula Hammond (WSDOT)	Tom Tilton (Discovery Institute)
Tom Jones (Wilbur Smith Associates)	Barbara Ivanov (WSDOT)
Duane Huckell (HWA)	Brian Gaver (WSDOT)
Arno Hart (Wilbur Smith Associates)	Elizabeth Stratton (WSDOT)
Rosemary Siipola (CWCOG/SWRTPO)	Bob Josephson (HNTB)
Bruce Agnew (Discovery Institute)	Scott Merriman (Association of WA Counties)

Chair Dan O’Neal opened the meeting at 8:15am at the WSDOT Tacoma Maintenance Facility.

**Discussion Points:**

Commerce Corridor Project Manager, Arno Hart of Wilbur Smith Associates briefed the committee on the “Definition of Feasibility,” (Tech Memo 1). Discussion points included:

The study will examine the geographic relationship between regions on the north-south corridor.

The study identified one east-west connector per county (e.g. Route 1, SR 20, US 2, I-90, SR 12, I-84/Hwy 14).

Senator Swecker recommended including connectivity to the west, and emphasizing connections to the ports.

Scott Merriman said that the Port of Grays Harbor and other southwest Washington communities seeking economic development opportunities should be included in planning east-west connections.

Can the corridor be built? Wilbur Smith have prepared a detailed decision matrix for use in determining feasibility. Key questions include:

- Is there demand for north-south traffic?
- Will the private sector participate?
- Will it cost too much to build?
- Is the corridor constructible?
- What are the legal and legislative barriers?
- Can the corridor pay for itself?
- Are the community impacts/GMA too significant?
- Are the environmental constraints and permitting requirements too significant?

Senator Swecker asked if the study would address future growth and capacity constraints in Los Angeles/Long Beach, that may shift use patterns in the Pacific Northwest.

Dan O'Neal asked if there is enough existent information to determine market demand. Paula Hammond said that the recent Strategic Freight Transportation Analysis (SFTA) origin destination data is an excellent resource. Arno Hart stated that the study will make use of existent data, as well as new research gained by interviewing developers, rail companies, oil companies and other private sector interests.

Senator Swecker asked if this corridor could be used solely for thruway, while allowing local trip usage on I-5. The consultants agreed with this analysis.

Arno Hart said that the study should focus on the long-term decision to preserve right-of-way for future corridors.

Dan O'Neal asked if the study would determine the potential to finance the corridor via truck tolls. Arno replied that the study would help decision makers decide if there is a role for government to preserve right-of-way and to facilitate private sector involvement in a corridor.

Potential components of the corridor:

Transportation

- Truck Freight - Exclusive commercial vehicle four-lane roadway.
- Rail Freight - Double track, shared with passenger rail.
- Passenger Car - Four lane roadway with weight limits.
- Passenger Rail - Double track, shared with freight rail.
- Non-motorized - Shared use path and separate equestrian trail.

Utilities

- Power - 500 kilovolt transmission line.
- Natural Gas - High pressure transmission line.
- Petroleum - Refined petroleum products.
- Telecommunication - Analog and digital communications.

Tom Jones said that utility representatives have expressed concerns about security with overlapping uses. Federal policy is moving towards designated energy corridors, in particular those crossing federal lands.

Probable corridor alignment options:

Environmental Constraints

- Sensitive park lands and public lands were avoided wherever possible.

Topographic Constraints

- The rugged terrain in many parts of the study area limited potential alignment alternatives.
- The Cascade Mountains constrained the probable corridor alignment to the east.

Socio-Economic Constraints

- The probable corridor alignment avoids high-density populated areas wherever possible.

- Potential locations for east-west corridor connections were maximized.

#### Coordination with Existing Rights-of-Way

- When possible, the probable corridor alignment follows existing rail lines or state highways, in order to minimize grade and topographic constraints.
- In some locations, the probable corridor alignment follows existing utility lines.

Bob Josephson briefed the committee on alignment options. Terrain: growing population centers and environmental issues limit options. Rail corridor can not follow highway corridor throughout the route, due to grade. Terrain limitations in Cowlitz County forces the corridor to rejoin I-5 south of Chehalis.

Dan O'Neal and Senator Swecker asked if Wilbur Smith could examine the cost of routing the corridor west of the Cascades (north of the Pierce-King County line) versus moving it to the east. Arno said that high volumes of traffic found on the westside is essential to private sector financial involvement.

Scott Merriman asked Wilbur Smith to create corridor preservation strategies. He also asked the study to address the key question: "Will this project induce growth?"

Tom Jones asked for the committee's guidance regarding public notification of work-to-date. The steering committee agreed on the following talking points:

- The study is conceptual only. No immediately implementable project or projects are expected from this study. Study timeframe will focus on twenty to fifty-year future need.
- The study will examine the need for replacement pipeline corridors for natural gas and petroleum, power transmission, and possible freight, passenger and piggyback truck rail service, as well as truck and passenger toll road.
- Two Advisory Forums for stakeholders are scheduled for mid-July and late October.

Arno asked team members to feel free to direct public inquiries to the WSDOT Freight website and/or Arno Hart, Tom Jones and Barbara Ivanov. Senator Swecker volunteered to serve as a political contact for reporters and citizens.

Tom Jones will call Representative Doug Erickson and Senator Tim Sheldon to brief them on work-to-date.

Dan O'Neal recommended Wilbur Smith brief the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Freight Mobility Round Table at their July meeting.

#### Public Forum:

July 16, 2004 from 9:00am to 12:30pm  
Bellevue Permit Office (WSDOT)  
10833 Northup Way NE, Bellevue

Senator Swecker recommended conducting the forum as a public meeting, with presentations first and public comment to follow.

Steering Committee Meeting:

July 1, 2004 from 8:00am to 10:00am  
WSDOT Tacoma Maintenance Facility  
Agenda to cover July 16 forum plan

Meeting adjourned at 10:15am